

Joint Committee on Judiciary Members -

I am writing to ask that you oppose SB 349, An Act Concerning the Penalty for possession of a Small Amount of Marijuana.

Two plus years ago, I lost my 20 year old nephew to a drug overdose. His addiction started with alcohol and recreational drugs like marijuana that he and his friends had easy access to in Middle School and High School here in CT. They were a great group of kids, but they mistakenly thought that they were stronger than the recreational drugs that they were doing. Good kids fall prey to the lure of drugs. My nephew didn't make it. Marijuana turned into prescription drugs and heroin. Several of his friends have been in and out of rehab facilities since their teens. They are now young men. They are not productive members of society. Their families live with the consequences of their addiction every day. And it all started with seemingly innocent marijuana.

If we as a State are not diligent about trying to stop the use of drugs that are known to have serious health and addiction implications, the costs will be far greater than the money that the state is looking to save by relaxing the possession laws.

If you have yet to be touched by drug addiction, I would recommend that you go to the following website: www.couragetospeak.org. The Courage to Speak organization was started by a Norwalk mother who lost her son to an overdose. She has dedicated her life to trying to educate children and parents about the risks associated with drug and alcohol use. I believe that relaxing our standards around drug possession would be a mistake. The medical literature is very conclusive about marijuana: it is addictive and it is a stepping stone to more potent and more dangerous drugs.

Please vote against SB349.

Thank you for your consideration.

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